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at 3 p.m.

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President: Mr. INSANALLY
(Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 42 *(continued)*

THE SITUATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: DRAFT RESOLUTION A/48/L.50

Mr. ANSARI (India): One of the greatest tragedies of modern times continues to unfold in the young Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The stark images of death and destruction and the intolerable suffering of innocent civilians displaced by that most abominable practice of ethnic cleansing continue to haunt us. Hopes for a lasting peace have been dashed repeatedly. Tenuous cease-fire agreements between the feuding parties have been shattered by the familiar sound of gunfire, to a pattern that seems to belie the international community's hope for reconciliation.

It is therefore with a feeling of deep grief and of concern for the future of an independent and sovereign Member of the United Nations that I speak here today to express India's anguish at the fact that peace remains elusive in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Several attempts have been made to resolve the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but it appears that there are still major areas of difference with regard to borders, access to the sea, guarantees for peace, the status of Sarajevo and - even more fundamental - the very viability of the union.

Against this chequered backdrop, the decision, made by the three warring parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 29 November, to resume negotiations immediately, on the basis of a plan of action put forward by the 12 Foreign Ministers of the European Union, was a long-awaited and heartening development. Unfortunately, the latest round of talks in Geneva did not yield any concrete results, apart from an agreement on access for humanitarian convoys. If anything, the talks further highlighted the impasse and the wide gulf in the coagulated and often Delphic positions adopted by the parties.

The Bosnian people could have been spared further suffering in the harsh winter ahead if the leaders of the parties to the conflict had taken the bold steps necessary to bring peace to that land. This would have paved the way for all the people of the former Yugoslavia to re-establish normal political and economic relations with the international community and to concentrate on social and economic reconstruction.

India has always laid stress on the urgent need for the three communities to arrive at a common, irreversible political agreement to end the tragic conflict. We in India remain committed to the principle - a principle to which we were consistently committed during our term in the Security Council - that the gains made by aggression and by ethnic cleansing cannot be allowed to prevail in an eventual settlement. During India's term in the Security Council, we steadfastly supported the Council's efforts towards peace and dialogue in the former Yugoslavia - efforts including the establishment of the United Nations peace-keeping operation; the imposition of embargoes and sanctions; the admittance of the Republics, including the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as equal Members of

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the United Nations; and various other moves to condemn violations of international humanitarian law and impediments to the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

A settlement would have to be patently fair, reasonable and, above all, acceptable to the three communities alike. The nature of any settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina would depend in very large measure on good will, good faith and a sense of give and take among the three communities. We also support the view that adjustments in the peace package could be considered by all three communities in the light of the principle that the union must be geographically, socially, economically and politically viable.

More important, we cannot permit any erosion of the concept of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States. The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is an equal member of this Assembly.

India believes that there is hope for a peacefully negotiated settlement. In the recent past there have been events that gave rise to anticipation and expectation, much like a silver lining to dark clouds. The three communities showed exemplary political will in successfully exchanging several batches of prisoners for the very first time in 18 months. Alas, these positive developments, which could have generated trust, could not be sustained and were quickly followed by the unravelling of a fragile peace in which even children and schools have not been spared.

The conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina is in many ways a test case for the new role of the United Nations. One of the biggest peace-keeping operations of all times has been mounted in this region. India had the privilege of providing the first Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), whose members have exhibited the highest sense of patience, courage and indomitable will to strive for peace in the face of numerous setbacks, including loss of life. My Government is particularly concerned at the continuation of mindless attacks on humanitarian workers and UNPROFOR personnel. There cannot be any doubt that UNPROFOR's continued presence is very important for the region.

At the same time, some very relevant and precedent-setting questions about the future of UNPROFOR and the form and scope of international intervention will need to be addressed in the planning for the post-agreement stage. Any action taken by the Security Council, whether under Chapters VI, VII or VIII, should be carried out with circumspection and in the strictest conformity with Charter provisions. The character of the international presence required to implement a peace agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina will doubtless have implications for future peace-keeping operations. The objectives of the proposed force, the resources available, the risks to personnel, the expected duration of the operation and, not least, the command and control aspect must be carefully examined. Such important questions must necessarily be addressed by the general membership with the seriousness they deserve.

India has traditionally enjoyed good relations with all the people of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is our earnest hope and desire to see the crisis and conflict speedily resolved in a political settlement through peaceful negotiations. India supports the strenuous and tireless efforts of the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia towards this objective. The task is urgent. History will not forgive us if we allow this lamentable state of affairs to continue. Let us not forget that we all have a stake in the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina - nay, in the future of international peace and security.

Mr. ABDUL-GHAFFAR (Bahrain) *(interpretation from Arabic):* For over two years, the aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been intensifying despite its Government's efforts to reach a settlement that would establish peace and improve living conditions there. The aggressor's destruction of the country continues unabated in an alarming and dangerous fashion, as do the unprecedented crimes of genocide and the starving of civilians, to the extent that these crimes have become the hallmark of the aggression.

Though attempts have been made to end these excesses and contain the aggression, they have unfortunately failed to curb the aggressors. Sensing a lack of opposition, the latter may even have grown more intransigent and confident that the Security Council as it stands now is incapable of taking firm and decisive action against them. They have grown complacent in their conviction that force will not be used against them and that they can go on perpetrating the crimes of mass killings and "ethnic cleansing" with impunity.

What irks mankind's conscience is the international community's reluctance to bring pressure to bear on the Serbian aggressors when they rejected the Vance-Owen Peace Plan. Thus they have been encouraged in their aggression against Bosnian cities and towns, which in turn prompted militant Croatian elements to enter the conflict in brazen defiance of the international community and without consideration of its will.

The grotesque developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina show the true nature of the aggressors in their persistent breaches of their binding promises and

obligations. This has been made clear in their violation of the sanctity of the six safe areas established under Security Council resolution 824 (1993) and in their flouting of the provisions of resolution 836 (1993). Their resolve and shameless way of dictating their will to the international community have been strengthened by their awareness of the Security Council's reluctance to take decisive action to deter their aggression and help the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to defend itself.

In our view, the position of the United Nations has sent the wrong message to the Serbian aggressors and has helped to support the extremist militants of Croatia in their massacres of civilians in central Bosnia and their destruction of Bosnian villages and towns. It has also led, directly and indirectly, to an implicit alliance between the Serbian forces and extremist Croatian elements, with a view to the partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina without regard for Security Council resolutions. The United Nations position has also encouraged them to continue to lay siege to Bosnian towns especially Sarajevo and the safe havens.

The current position of the Security Council towards the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina will not lead to stability there. To the contrary, the Council's failure to take firm action could promote violence and militancy, not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina but in other regions of the Balkans as well. This would have an adverse impact on the role of the United Nations in containing the current and potential conflicts.

In contrast to this negative position, it is the duty and historic responsibility of the international community to ensure the complete independence, national unity and territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It should stand steadfastly in the face of aggression and preventing the crime of genocide and other crimes against humanity. It should also reject unreservedly the acquisition of territory by means of force and the policy of "ethnic cleansing".

We are in no doubt that the establishment of the International Tribunal to prosecute violators of international humanitarian law in the former Yugoslavia, pursuant to Security Council resolution 827 (1993), was an appropriate action, and will help restore peace and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina. While we consider this to be a step in the right direction, we hope the Tribunal will not be used for purely political purposes to put pressure on the victim to accept a *fait accompli* or to wreak vengeance on the victim and permit the aggressors to reap the benefits of their aggression.

With the onset of winter, we call upon the Security Council to prevent the exacerbation of an already grave situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to ensure the safe flow of humanitarian assistance to Bosnian cities and villages. The Council should compel Serb forces to withdraw their heavy weapons from the Sarajevo area and should deploy UNPROFOR units in the areas evacuated by the Serbs. Heavy weapons should also be withdrawn from the environments of the safe areas.

My delegation stresses the right of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a State Member of the United Nations, to enjoy, like all other Member States, all the rights set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, including the right of self-defence under Article 51. The United Nations must tirelessly and immediately make every effort to put an end to the aggression in Bosnia and Herzegovina, lest history judge that the international community sided with the aggressor against the victim.

Mr. SUCHARIPA (Austria): A year has passed since the General Assembly last discussed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In these 12 months the situation has certainly not improved, but rather has deteriorated dramatically. Despite intensive and ongoing efforts, in particular within the framework of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, an end to the fighting has not been brought about, and the prospects for a just and lasting result from the intermittent negotiating process are still more than unclear. In the last few months alone, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina has caused thousands of casualties and the destruction of entire towns and villages. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been forced to flee their homes.

With the onset of winter, a winter expected to be hard and long, the tragedy of the civilian population is likely to become a humanitarian disaster of the most horrible dimensions, as 2.7 million people in Bosnia and Herzegovina depend upon humanitarian assistance; many of them are threatened by starvation and exposure. In the absence of peace, therefore, the international community has to give priority to humanitarian assistance and to secure access for deliveries to the affected areas. In that context, I want to express my delegation's highest appreciation to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and her staff for their tireless efforts, and to other humanitarian organizations, as well as to the thousands of troops serving in the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

It was under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Ogata, that all parties entered into an agreement in Geneva on 18 November to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance by

suspending hostilities and allowing free and unconditional access by the most effective land routes. This agreement, reaffirmed and further elaborated in Geneva on 29 November 1993, seems to have enabled some convoys, particularly in central Bosnia, to reach their destination. Disturbing reports, however, indicate that access for humanitarian relief convoys continues to be hampered or prevented, and that the necessary freedom of movement of all United Nations personnel continues to be restricted. We therefore call on all sides to adhere to their obligations and honour their commitments in order to permit the desperately needed acceleration of humanitarian deliveries.

To impede humanitarian assistance relief operations through military means is simply unacceptable. Whoever commits such acts violates the most basic principles of international civilization and will be held responsible. In the absence of a negotiated and implemented peace plan, the international community, for its part, has to make increased assistance to the innocent victims in Bosnia and Herzegovina its foremost priority.

While all possible efforts are made to alleviate the humanitarian situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the urgent need for an effective cease-fire and a just and lasting political solution has to be recognized. However, as Mrs. Ogata put it in her statement during the meeting on the situation in the former Yugoslavia which took place in Geneva on 29 November, "Relief convoys cannot be a substitute for peace".

Any peaceful solution will have to be achieved in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the principles set out by the London International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia in August 1992, and the relevant Security Council resolutions. It is more than appropriate to recall that basic fact on the very eve of yet a further round of negotiations and in view of new shelling attacks directed against the city of Sarajevo, which in the draft resolution before us is rightly described as a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multireligious centre whose plurality needs to be preserved.

Peace plans calling for *de facto* recognition of the status quo, a status quo established against all the above-mentioned principles, and in violation of independence, territorial integrity and human rights, would be likely to engender further conflict in the future. There is imminent danger that a State Member of the United Nations, Bosnia and Herzegovina, could be divided up in a move sanctioned by the international community. That danger, as well as the ongoing violations of international law, human rights and humanitarian law, puts fundamental principles of international conduct in jeopardy while seriously undermining the reputation and credibility of the international organizations involved. The apparent failure of the United Nations system of collective security - a failure which, of course, is only the mirror image of the lack of political resolve on the part of Member States - is especially alarming in this regard, with already discernible negative consequences for similar conflicts present and future.

It is with those grave considerations in mind that Austria will support the draft resolution before the Assembly.

Mr. ABDUL MOMIN (Brunei Darussalam): The worsening situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina not only is bringing severe hardship to the Bosnian people but continues to pose a threat to international peace and security. The Bosnian Government has appealed to the conscience of the international community to help it find a solution to the conflict, and a great number of resolutions aimed at achieving this have been adopted by the General Assembly, by the Security Council and by other bodies.

However, these resolutions, some under Chapter VII of the Charter, are often unheeded and thus risk becoming mere words that bear little meaning to the people that they are meant to help. They seem to serve only to embolden the aggressors and make them feel that the international community will permit them to act with impunity. For this reason we have stated that we believe the United Nations should lift the arms embargo. The current situation contains no new elements which encourage us to alter that view. We still maintain that the Bosnian Government is entitled to expect this Organization to allow it the right of all sovereign nations to undertake the defence of their country and protect their people themselves.

Brunei Darussalam reiterates its strong support for the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We continue to condemn the aggression and atrocities committed against the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their country. We favour a solution which is consistent with the principles stated in the various Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and which conform to the wishes of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We wish to see the return of territories acquired through the use of force and through the practice of "ethnic cleansing", as well as specific guarantees on the implementation of any final agreement from the countries and regional organizations concerned. As a first step we urge all sides to respect and comply with the cease-fire agreement.

In this regard we continue to look to all concerned and interested parties, as well as to the Security Council, to act decisively. We seek an end to this crisis that guarantees the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and also brings to account all who have committed the ongoing massive violations of human rights.

Finally, I wish to assure all those directly involved in United Nations humanitarian operations of our profound acknowledgement of the efforts made by those countries, international organizations and private individuals that have contributed vital assistance to the Bosnians. Courageous people have lost their lives in their determination to alleviate the sufferings in that country, and we feel for them as much as we do for all victims of this conflict.

Mrs. FRECHETTE (Canada): Canadians remain horrified by the continuing brutality and suffering in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. One year ago in the Assembly we addressed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the hope that 1993 would bring an end to this tragic conflict. Today, we can only reluctantly recognize how desperate the situation continues to be, despite the tireless efforts of the international community, in particular those of the United Nations, its peace-keepers, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other specialized agencies and the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia.

Over the past year numerous negotiations have been held and various peace proposals have been put forward - by the parties themselves, by the Co-Chairmen and by the European Union. All of these proposals contain elements for a pragmatic and durable solution in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as in the rest of former Yugoslavia. Canada strongly supports the present efforts of the Co-Chairmen and the European Union.

In order to see an end to the suffering of the Bosnian people we must draw certain conclusions from the reality of the situation on the ground. Continued fighting will not bring the parties any closer to peace - in fact, the reverse. Only they themselves can bring an end to the fighting. The differences between the parties can be bridged if there is the political will to do so. The continued hardship and suffering for the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina through another winter and beyond can in no way be justified.

We welcome the resumption of negotiations in Geneva and Brussels next week and strongly call upon the parties to make the difficult compromises required to reach a durable settlement. Any solution must provide for the viability of the Bosnian Moslem- majority Republic, with access to the sea. The parties must immediately live up to their agreements, in particular the 29 November Geneva Agreement to allow the unimpeded delivery of relief supplies to all those in need in Bosnia and Herzegovina. All sides must cease interfering with humanitarian convoys.

(spoke in French)

The international community and States Members of the United Nations want above all to put an end to the war in the former Yugoslavia. In resolution 47/121 adopted last year the Assembly expressed its appreciation of all the ongoing international efforts to restore peace in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and also commended the untiring efforts and bravery of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in securing relief operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the efforts of the UNHCR and other relief and humanitarian agencies.

An International Tribunal has been established to deal with war crimes in the former Yugoslavia. Canada was one of the first nations to call for its creation, which sets an important precedent and sends a clear signal to those who are with impunity flouting the basic tenets of humanitarian law that the international community will not tolerate their actions. Canada is continuing to play an active part in the investigation of war crimes and looks forward to the early start of the Tribunal's work.

Canada remains committed to the search for peace in the former Yugoslavia. Canadian peace-keepers remain on duty with UNPROFOR in Bosnia and in Croatia as its third-largest contingent. To date, our total assistance in the region is close to $CAN 270 million, including $CAN 50 million of humanitarian relief in the form of food, medicine and other essential supplies to help the victims. In addition, Canadian aircraft daily bring urgently needed supplies into Sarajevo and transport medical evacuees for treatment in hospitals in Canada and elsewhere in the world. We are strictly enforcing the United Nations sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro, the United Nations protected areas in Croatia and the Serb-controlled areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Canada supports the efforts of the Security Council and the General Assembly. In this connection, we would have hoped to have been able to support the draft resolution (A/48/L.50) before us. Indeed, there is much in the draft resolution with which we are in complete agreement. Regrettably, however, the draft resolution contains certain elements that make it impossible for my delegation to vote in favour of it in its present form. Most

important, we cannot support a call for lifting the arms embargo. We are convinced that adding more weapons to the region would increase violence and destruction and make it even more difficult to reach a negotiated peace. It is for that reason that my delegation will abstain in the voting on the draft resolution now before the Assembly.

Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia): Ever since the eruption of the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, we have been witnessing the violent and forcible subjugation of a State Member of the United Nations. The horror has continued in all its intensity during the past year, with wide-ranging ramifications for the future not only of that Republic but of the entire Balkan region. This escalation and the resulting deterioration of the situation reflects the total defiance of the international community and its decisions and are a blatant violation of international humanitarian law.

We strongly condemn the continued shelling of cities and towns, the unending massacres, the mass expulsions and the unconscionable policy of "ethnic cleansing". In this context, Indonesia has consistently endeavoured, both in the Non-aligned Movement and in the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to secure a speedy and negotiated solution within the framework of appropriate international mechanisms. It is self-evident that the carnage - particularly the virulent type of warfare in Bosnia - must end and peace, security and tranquillity in that beleaguered nation must be restored.

Under the threat of a continuation of the unequal war, the Bosnians are being coerced into accepting the partition of their country along ethnic lines - an arrangement that would reduce Bosnia to a cluster of small, non-contiguous, land-locked and perpetually vulnerable Muslim enclaves, within a so-called union of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As the revised peace plan now stands, large areas of what was formerly Bosnian territory would be ceded to Bosnia's adversaries.

Acceptance of this plan would legitimize aggression, result in further suffering for the Bosnians and, ultimately, lead to the disintegration of their country. It would prolong the turmoil and would perpetuate regional instability. It could lead to annexation, by Serbia and Croatia, of Bosnian territory and could consign Bosnia to a disproportionate fraction of the land. And it would render Bosnia a non-viable State because of its location between two hostile States, which could cut off its access to the outside world and, thereby, maintain a stranglehold on its economic life.

The Government of Bosnia, having steadfastly opposed the partition plan, has none the less conditionally agreed to such a division if it is part of a comprehensive agreement that would secure Bosnia's legitimate interests in terms of its basic territorial, economic and security needs, as well as safe access to the sea and safe passage between the Republic's component parts.

Meanwhile, much of the population of Bosnia is already severely impoverished as a result of the miseries imposed by a cruel war. Living conditions - already grim - are now worsening with the onset of winter. Economic hardships are mounting across the devastated tracts of Bosnian territory. The shortage of essential goods poses an increasing threat to the survival of Bosnia as aid convoys and trucks become frequent targets.

These deprivations have been aggravated by the reign of terror unleashed by lawless elements. In short, the rapid depletion of resources, the plummeting of economies, the disturbing increase in the number of displaced persons and the near-collapse of infrastructures are all occurring against the backdrop of profoundly dismal prospects for an end to hostilities.

The situation is further compounded by Serbia's duplicity and by its refusal to implement the provisions of last month's agreement to refrain from obstructing relief convoys with a view to averting a humanitarian catastrophe. Coming in the wake of repeated violations of cease-fire and other commitments, the repudiation of this accord on the free and unimpeded flow of aid is no doubt intended to humiliate the people of Bosnia into submission.

We should also take note of the dichotomy inherent in the so-called safe areas, which have proved to be neither safe nor secure. Indeed, these areas have suffered the heaviest bombardment.

Thus, the situation in Bosnia can be summed up as constituting a clear contravention of basic principles of the United Nations Charter, a travesty of justice and abject surrender of the notion of the primacy of law over the use of force. It is a blatant case of negotiations being conducted under duress and of a forced compromise between aggressors and their victims, which may well lead to renewed violence, greater insecurity and massive displacement of persons. Consequently, Bosnia and Herzegovina is facing the dangerous prospect of the forcible dismantling of its multi-ethnic, multicultural and multireligious society, the brutal decimation of its people and the gradual diminution of an independent and sovereign State Member of the United Nations.

Hence, my delegation will continue to support the Government and people of Bosnia and Herzegovina in their legitimate struggle to attain a just, viable and

comprehensive settlement. The "off again, on again" negotiations remain stymied owing to the persistent Serbian refusal to yield territory acquired by force of arms.

But of immediate concern is the imperative need to ensure safe passage for relief convoys, through the use of force, in order to remove the threat of imminent human disaster as the fighting enters its second winter.

We also call for urgent action to broaden the role of the United Nations through the provision of relief corridors on land and protective cordons around besieged cities and towns. These measures should be followed by the rapid and unconditional withdrawal of Serbian and Croatian troops and by the surrender of heavy weapons to the peace-keeping forces, which must be strengthened.

Furthermore, any search for a new and more comprehensive peace should be based on the relinquishing of territory and on the right of all refugees and all those who were forcibly expelled to return. Any arrangement should ensure that an independent Bosnia is strategically and economically viable and has Sarajevo as its capital. Finally, any negotiated accord must be freely entered by the parties concerned and must be viable, equitable, fair and enforceable.

In the meantime, the economic sanctions imposed on the former Yugoslavia must be continued. We commend the Security Council's refusal to lift them. Any decision in this regard must not be taken until a peace plan has been signed and is being implemented under international guarantees.

In conclusion, we reaffirm that a comprehensive solution to the conflict can be attained only through a negotiated settlement based on the precepts of justice and mutual tolerance - a settlement enabling the people of Bosnia and its neighbours to coexist in peace, free from domination and external interference. We also reiterate the sacrosanct principle that the borders of an internationally recognized State cannot be altered by force. Serbia must be stopped, and Bosnia's territorial integrity and sovereignty restored. Even at this late stage, the measures that the international community undertakes - or fails to undertake - will determine the survival of Bosnia and, indeed, the future peace and stability of the entire Balkan region.

The draft resolution before us is in full conformity with resolutions already adopted by the General Assembly and by the Security Council, as well as with principles of international law, and it takes other relevant developments into account. In my delegation's view, it warrants unanimous adoption.

Miss AL-KHALED (Kuwait) *(interpretation from Arabic):* At the outset, I should like to send from this podium a message of great esteem to the Government and people of Bosnia and Herzegovina for their steadfast stand in the face of continued aggression.

My country has followed with deep sorrow the ongoing tragedy in Bosnia since 30 May 1992. Suffice it to say that the callous acts of murder and the policy of "ethnic cleansing" that have befallen the Muslim population of Bosnia brand with shame the brow of humanity in our times. The result of the continuing Serbian aggression has been the occupation of two thirds of Bosnian territory, the ongoing destruction of cities and villages, and further acts of murder, rape and horrendous famine.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains one of my country's main concerns. We are gravely disturbed yet another attempt to compel the Government of that country to accept what is tantamount to a final ultimatum in the guise of a peace plan, together with a map of an illusory union, made up of disjointed enclaves, without an army or a police force directly under a central authority or an elected parliament. The Serbs have imposed this *fait accompli* by occupying two-thirds of the Bosnian territory. Regrettably, international mediators accepted this *fait accompli* and the weaker party was asked either for concessions on lands or to continue being subjected to aggression and destruction.

The new peace plan is a desperate attempt to halt the violence and bloodshed without any international commitment to restore the occupied land to its owners. The international community has allowed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina to deteriorate to a politically unacceptable level - an international crime against the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The two Co-Chairman of the Steering Committee submitted a settlement plan for Bosnia in August 1993. The report, in document S/26260, stated that the past year's efforts have shown that the parties to the conflict are unable to make peace by themselves and that even impartial intermediaries cannot always shift one or other of the sides from adopting intransigent and unreasonable positions. However, the international community may justify its indifference towards the events in the Balkans, the consequences of those events will prove disastrous in the days and years to come.

It is not only the human suffering in Bosnia and Herzegovina that is at stake here but also the universality of the civilized norms which form the basis of our dealings with each other. Can we accept the principle of the

acquisition of land by force and thence the use or threat of use of force in international relations? Kuwait was subjected to aggression by Iraq and knows the meaning of the use of force and the acquisition of land by force. Therefore, we cannot accept this principle. Any permanent settlement in Bosnia should be based on dialogue, consultation and negotiation.

My country, Kuwait, believes that it is important to achieve two main objectives: first, that of ensuring an effective and complete cease-fire and an end to all hostilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina; secondly, that of establishing a framework of principles on the basis of the principles of the London Conference as the groundwork upon which peace and a peaceful settlement may be built. We call for the lifting of the arms embargo imposed on Bosnia and Herzegovina so that it can defend itself in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter. We call for the strengthening of the economic embargo on Serbia and Montenegro so that the Belgrade regime may stop supplying the Serb aggressors with military *matériel*. We call upon the Security Council to enforce the no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina, by military means available to the United Nations under Chapter VII of the Charter.

We have followed with deep concern the activities of the Commission of Experts established Security Council 780 (1992) to investigate serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991. Those crimes include mass killing, the destruction of property, the mistreatment of detainees and prisoners, the barbaric policy of rape, the policy of "religious cleansing", the expulsion of civilian populations and other horrendous crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The report of the Commission states that there are 393 detention facilities, of which 158 are controlled by the Serb forces, that there are more than 200 mass graves, in which approximately 4,000 people have been are buried and that the number of cases of rape as a systematic policy of war against the Muslims is about 12,000.

We call upon the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities and reaffirm its credibility in the area of maintaining peace and security as it did in dealing with the Iraqi aggression against my country. We deem it important that the international community fully respect the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a State Member of the United Nations, so that it may remain a Member of this Organization.

Mr. CISSE (Senegal) *(interpretation from French)*: In the history of our Organization, few questions have been the subject of so many resolutions and statements on behalf of the Security Council as has the tragic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nor could more be added to what has already been said to deplore and condemn this tragedy, which continues to weigh upon our collective conscience. And yet the current debate is no less important for all that, because it gives us the chance to remind the international community once again that, after 20 months, it has yet to put an end to the suffering of the Bosnian people.

This failure is all the more unfortunate in that it would seem to encourage the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose people have been continuously subjected to violence, flagrant violations of their human rights, affronts to their human dignity and the rape of women. There is obviously no longer any need to dwell at length on the heavy price being paid daily by men, women and children beleaguered, persecuted and decimated wholesale by methods which recall the very darkest moments of human history.

It is therefore unacceptable that all the efforts made so far by the international community, and particularly the United Nations, to put an end to this tragedy have yet to have any effect, owing to the intransigence of the Serbian party and the insensitivity of others.

In a recent message to the Heads of State or Government of the five permanent members of the Security Council, sent in his capacity as current Chairman of the Sixth Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Head of State of Senegal described the tragedy of the Bosnian people in these words:

> "The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is extremely precarious, in view of the acts that continue to be perpetrated there by the Serbs. These acts are a grave breach of that country's territorial integrity and of the Bosnian people's fundamental and inalienable right to live in peace, freedom, justice and dignity, like all the other countries of the former Yugoslavia. For that reason, these acts are clearly a violation of international law, and, because of their persistence and scope, they are a serious threat to the equilibrium of the entire region and to international peace and security."

The most serious point is that the aggressors and the forces supporting them pursue their "ethnic cleansing" in total disregard of the injunctions of the international community, particularly those of the Security Council, whose relevant resolutions have simply been ignored. The situation is so desperate that we almost think that for the first time since the end of the Second World War our Organization is acting as if it had set limits that it will not cross in the face of a flagrant violation of principles and norms on respect for which depends the preservation of

international peace and security, one of the Organization's main objectives.

Though we have recently demonstrated our deep commitment to these principles and norms, we must note that during the 20 long months of suffering and wilful destruction endured by the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina it has never been possible, despite all the declarations of good intent, to impose a lasting truce - much less a complete cease-fire - which is a necessary condition for the peaceful, negotiated solution so earnestly desired.

Nevertheless, the people of Bosnia and their capable leaders have never given in to despair, nor has their confidence in us flagged. In this regard, we should particularly praise the far-sightedness and statesmanship of President Izetbegovic, whose sense of responsibility and political courage lend strength to the rejection of any solution that would constitute capitulation.

Today the forces of aggression, having rejected all the compromises so painstakingly elaborated in the framework of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, are demanding ratification of the *fait accompli* so that the results of their policy of "ethnic cleansing" and other violations of international law will be accepted. Faced with this challenge issued by Serbia and Montenegro, the United Nations, and particularly the Security Council, must adopt a new approach and take appropriate measures to put an end to this genocide.

Because, much to our regret, it has been unable to impose an immediate, effective cease-fire, our Organization should, at the very least, guarantee the protection of civilian populations in the safe areas, which were defined and established, some time ago, under air cover. On this point, as on many others, optimism is hardly warranted, according to Mr. Mazowiecki, who considers that the safe areas exist only on paper.

In order to give some meaning to the arms embargo imposed on the countries of the former Yugoslavia, an embargo which in fact hurt, only Bosnia and Herzegovina, our Organization should do more to protect those providing humanitarian assistance and facilitate their efforts so that assistance can reach the Bosnian population more regularly.

Furthermore, the United Nations should either come up with the means and the will to put an end to the supply of arms to all the parties receiving them or lift the embargo, which is paralysing only Bosnia and Herzegovina, so that it can defend itself. By the same token, the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), whose professionalism we commend, should be strengthened, broadened and clearly defined in order to allow it to establish and maintain order in such a way as to help promote efforts to reach a negotiated peace.

Today, more than ever, we are facing a challenge to the credibility of our Organization and its ability to prevent this conflict from spilling over into the neighbouring provinces of Kosovo, Sandzak and Vojvodina. The delicate balance in this troubled area of the Balkans depends very much on the resolute commitment of the United Nations and of the regional organizations involved in the process of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia to induce all the forces involved to sit down at a table and sincerely seek a just, equitable and lasting solution negotiated in good faith.

Therefore, to request the United Nations to lift or even relax, for allegedly humanitarian reasons, the sanctions imposed on Serbia and Montenegro, just when the sanctions are beginning to have some effect and when Bosnia and Herzegovina and its martyred people are facing the rigours of winter and frustration, seems to me to be an affront to our conscience. Since the conflict began economic sanctions have been the only measure apparently capable of putting any pressure on those responsible for the aggression.

Furthermore, we know that in order to keep a strong army and continue to assist the aggressor Serb forces of aggression in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro diverts its resources, including medical supplies, for the benefit of its army alone. Otherwise, how could we account for the pictures we have seen of well-fed and well-equipped soldiers side-by-side with pictures of hospitals without medicine and essential equipment or pictures of abandoned mental asylums?

Although we feel compassion for human suffering, wherever and among whatever population it occurs, we believe that the sanctions should remain in place until the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina and the massive violations of human rights have been put to an end and a just and lasting solution to the conflict has been reached on the basis of the conditions laid down by the Security Council. I believe that protecting the safe areas remains a priority.

For all these reasons my delegation fully supports the draft resolution before the Assembly. We earnestly hope that it will be adopted by consensus, since that will contribute to strengthening our joint efforts to safeguard the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to guarantee peace and security in the Balkans. It will also send a clear message

to the Serb side of our firm resolve not to reward its aggression.

In conclusion, I should like once again to draw inspiration from the message of President Abdou Diouf and say that the success of the proposed step would guarantee both the legitimate rights of the Bosnian people and the return of stability to that part of Europe. Between law and injustice based on the law of the strongest, our choice should be easy, if it is our desire - as I hope it is - to bring lasting peace and security back to that region so that its peoples may live in mutual respect and perfect harmony.

If we fail to keep this rendezvous with history, future generations, whose hopes are all pinned on our Organization, will be amazed.

Mr. KHOSHROO (Islamic Republic of Iran): The General Assembly meets today to discuss an issue that cannot but jar the conscience of every human being. For more than two years the innocent Muslim people of Bosnia and Herzegovina have been subjected to indiscriminate uprooting, mass rape and systematic murder by the Serbs. Throughout this period, Serbian nationalists have conducted a campaign of genocide, with the full support of Serbia and Montenegro. The horrendous crimes and brutal aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Member State of the United Nations, is without question one of the worst human tragedies in contemporary history.

Over the past two years it has become abundantly clear to the world community that the Serbian forces will not stop their genocidal aggression as long as the Security Council is reluctant to take enforcement measures, including the use of force under Chapter VII of the Charter. Unfortunately, the Security Council has failed to shoulder its responsibilities under the Charter to halt Serbian aggression, much less to reverse it. The approach and attitude of the Security Council towards this conflict has, in fact, had grave implications for the political independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and for international peace and security.

Indeed, the Security Council's attitude towards the brutal uprooting and gradual extinction of a young Member State of the United Nations clearly reveals that a passive approach and a policy characterized by double standards, appeasement and leniency toward the aggressor has prevented the international community from affecting justice. This has also allowed the aggressor to dictate its terms to the Security Council and to continue its aggression with impunity.

The unjustifiable denial of the inherent right of an independent State to individual or collective self-defence under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter left the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the mercy of their aggressors. The unfortunate result has been a total disregard for the individual rights of a nation and for their underlying international norms and principles. Now that the national interests of the powerful States have taken precedence over international obligations, and now that these States have adopted an attitude that is bent on legitimizing the aggressor's gains, the international community is confronted with an urgent task. It is incumbent upon us to demonstrate our moral and political support in defence of the besieged people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We should do everything in our power to alleviate their sufferings and to address those concerns.

In this context, the Security Council, in fulfilling its responsibility under Article 24 of the Charter, must take prompt and effective action under the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter. It must authorize United Nations Member States, in cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to use all necessary means to uphold and restore the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, the Security Council must exempt, without any further delay, the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the arms embargo imposed under Security Council resolution 713 (1991).

It is evident that peace negotiations in this conflict have not been conducted in a fair and just manner. Nor do the proposed peace plans measure up to the principles of equity and justice. For negotiations to be successful, the aggressors, who have enjoyed military superiority, must be made to acknowledge that only a just and equitable solution will be acceptable to the international community - not a solution dictated by the use of force and "ethnic cleansing". In this regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that, despite the consistent show of flexibility by the Bosnian Government, the peace talks have, regrettably, faltered because of continued intransigence by the Serbs.

We believe that the Assembly should adopt a resolution founded on the basic and fundamental principles required for a peaceful resolution of the human tragedy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These include, in particular, recognition of the viability of the Government and Muslim people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including their ability to defend themselves; the establishment of a meaningful cease-fire; the withdrawal of Serbian heavy weaponry to areas outside the safe areas; the lifting of the siege of the cities; the restoration of unhindered access to humanitarian assistance; a reaffirmation of the unacceptability of the

acquisition of territory by force and "ethnic cleansing" and the need to evacuate territories thus occupied; the safe and honourable return of refugees; and the right of the Government and people of Bosnia to seek and receive reparations and compensation. Finally, individuals guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity must be punished.

It is against this background that my delegation co-sponsored the proposed draft resolution on Bosnia and Herzegovina and strongly supports its adoption by the General Assembly. The draft resolution encompasses principles which will help establish a lasting peace in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this regard, the draft resolution urges the Security Council to uphold and restore fully the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to exempt that country from the arms embargo. Furthermore, it calls upon the Security Council to ensure that the peace proposals are in conformity with the Charter, the principles of international law, previous resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council and the principles adopted at the London Conference. In our opinion, the Security Council should heed these repeated calls of the international community and remedy its past mistakes.

Many countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, are alarmed at the recent suggestion that the sanctions imposed against Serbia and Montenegro should be relaxed. It is regrettable that such talk about lifting the sanctions can take place while the Serbian aggression continues unabated. These sanctions, which were imposed in the wake of blatant Serbian aggression against Bosnia, should continue until all conditions stipulated by the Security Council are fully met, including evacuation of the territories occupied by force and "ethnic cleansing".

Here in the General Assembly, we who represent the entire international community have always been in the forefront of the defence of human values and internationally accepted norms and principles. Without doubt, our concerted and collective efforts will enable us to withstand crimes against humanity and defend and preserve the political independence, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready to lend its full support to the realization of these objectives.

Mr. OSVALD (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

The tragedy in Bosnia and Herzegovina has led to immense and unacceptable human suffering in spite of the fact that efforts for peace have been going on continuously since 1992. The Nordic countries fully support the unstinting efforts of Lord Owen and Mr. Stoltenberg, and of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, to promote the cessation of hostilities and negotiations for a peaceful settlement. The international community must not tire in its efforts to contribute to a cessation of the fighting and to the negotiation of a peace agreement.

Despite all efforts, the parties have until now failed to reach a peace agreement on the basis of the three peace proposals put forward within the framework of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. The European Union's initiative is a new opportunity to settle the conflict in a peaceful manner. We hope the parties will make use of this opportunity. The international community cannot make peace for them.

The civilian population is the main victim of the war in Bosnia. They are suffering grievously from military aggression, "ethnic cleansing", torture and violence - even against women and children. The parties must realize that prolonging the war will not improve their own situation in the long run. Peace must be given a chance.

It is tragic that a multi-ethnic Bosnian State does not seem to be feasible for the moment. Still, this must remain the long- term objective. The process of reversing the results of war and of "ethnic cleansing" can be undertaken only under peaceful conditions that guarantee the fundamental rights of all ethnic groups.

The Nordic countries welcome the establishment of the International Tribunal on war crimes. Those responsible for breaches of international humanitarian law and violations of human rights must be brought to justice for these atrocities.

A severe winter is already starting to further exacerbate the excruciating plight of the population, which is already facing starvation. Relief convoys are being stopped and used as weapons in the conflict, both as a deliberate tactic by the parties involved and by irregular units. Criminality and widespread lawlessness are increasingly prominent features of the conflict.

The demand that aid shipments be allowed to reach those in need has imperative urgency in this situation. The parties must, in accordance with the Joint Declaration signed in Geneva on 18 November 1993 and confirmed on 29 November, ensure complete and secure freedom of movement for all humanitarian convoys.

If the war continues, it will become increasingly difficult to launch an international rehabilitation initiative on a sufficient scale. At the same time, the rest of the world must present a clearer picture of what a civilian reconstruction initiative might involve.

As far as Bosnia and Herzegovina is concerned, the implementation of a peace agreement must be one of the prerequisites for the gradual lifting or suspension of sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The international community must provide guarantees for a peace plan at both the civilian and the military level. All countries, and in particular the great Powers, must live up to their responsibilities in this context.

The Nordic countries remain prepared to participate in the implementation of a peace agreement. We also consider that a number of international organizations, including the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the European Community monitoring mission and several non-governmental organizations, have an important role to play and can thus make major contributions to this process.

In the peace-keeping area, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) is currently understaffed in Bosnia and is operating under extremely difficult conditions. UNPROFOR has to face not only armed attacks but also the problem of the blocking of transportation of equipment and relief to those in need.

The opening of the Tuzla airfield is a vital factor for the distribution of humanitarian relief. This would also improve the possibility of getting supplies through to United Nations personnel. We therefore urge the parties to cooperate with the United Nations in order to reopen the Tuzla airfield.

Despite the adverse circumstances, UNPROFOR is making an invaluable contribution, primarily in the humanitarian sphere, in close cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the principal United Nations agency. The Nordic countries are currently contributing approximately 3,300 personnel to UNPROFOR, 2,000 of which are deployed in Bosnia. The Nordic contingent in the Tuzla area is now in the process of being deployed. At the moment, approximately 900 out of a total of 1,300 Nordic personnel are in this area of operations.

The Nordic contingent in Bosnia has been put to the test and is facing cruel realities. Its personnel is harassed and attacked. There is also a shortage and lack of basic equipment. It is unacceptable for the Serb side to block the delivery of equipment and supplies to the Nordic peace-keeping force in Tuzla and to other UNPROFOR forces.

In the humanitarian sphere, the Nordic countries are together contributing a total of approximately $182 million to various programmes in the former Yugoslavia, mainly in Bosnia. The assistance is, *inter alia*, for housing for displaced persons, medicine and food supplies.

Refugee flows are another tragic effect of the war in the former Yugoslavia. More than 60,000 Bosnians have so far sought refuge in the Nordic countries. It is essential that more countries demonstrate a generous attitude in providing humanitarian assistance to the region as well as in accepting refugees from Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia.

The draft resolution (A/48/L.50) before us today reflects the very serious situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It reaffirms several important principles that must guide the search for a settlement. While we fully support the main objectives of the draft resolution, which are to bring an end to the hostilities and contribute to the restoration of peace, certain provisions cause difficulties for the Nordic countries. These relate, *inter alia*, to the well-known Nordic position regarding operative paragraph 17 of the draft resolution. The Nordic countries will thus not be in a position to support the draft.

Finally, it should be stressed that a lasting peace agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina is, to some extent, dependent on positive developments throughout the former Yugoslavia, particularly in Croatia and Kosovo. Therefore, while the parties concerned and the international community are working for peace in Bosnia, measures must be undertaken simultaneously to secure peace in the region as a whole.

Mr. ODEH (Jordan) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: This is the third session in a row at which the General Assembly has remained seized of the issue of the continuing Serbian aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Member State of the United Nations. The Serbian aggression, however, has only intensified in brutality and expanded in scope. The Serbian aggressors persist in their stark violation of the well-established humanitarian system of values and civilized norms of conduct as they thumb their noses at the institutions of international legality.

Last year, when the General Assembly examined this international conflict, the most salient feature of the issue, apart from its most horrific nature, was the striking imbalance between the aggressor and the victim. On one

side stood the Serbs, armed to the teeth and secure in their military superiority, jubilant over their victories and driven by ultra-nationalistic and religious bigotry. On the other side were the Bosnians, who had far less weaponry yet believed in national and religious pluralism. Their land was progressively being swallowed up, while the civilian population continued to be the victims of "ethnic cleansing" and of every other conceivable form of terrorism.

Against that backdrop, when this question was debated in the Assembly at the last session, we had entertained some hope that the aggression would be suppressed and brought under control. Our hope then was anchored in the United Nations, whose Charter calls on it to intervene to fulfil its obligations towards the victims of aggression, who see in our world Organization a last recourse for justice. Our perception was that the United Nations would rectify the imbalance by acting effectively on behalf of the victim, with a view to laying the groundwork for the peaceful resolution of the conflict through the good offices of the international mediators.

In effect, the Security Council adopted a series of resolutions in the hope that this would influence the Serbs and prod them towards accepting a cease-fire and negotiating in real earnest with a view to achieving a just peace between the parties that would provide the groundwork for a genuine, more comprehensive peace throughout the Balkans.

Today, as the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly takes up the Serb aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, my delegation is saddened by the way those hopes are receding, their spark fading to near extinction. The picture today is unremittingly abhorrent: it is the picture of an uninterrupted series of Serb atrocities against the land and the people of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our sadness is all the worse for seeing an impotent United Nations failing to carry out its own resolutions. The entire scene is simultaneously alarming and repugnant.

Thinking aloud, I wonder if there could be a scenario more blood-curdling than that of the United Nations losing its credibility. Can there be a more menacing threat to international peace and security than the unbridled lust for territorial expansion, annexation and secession by the force of arms? Does anything strike more terror in our hearts than the determination to ignore the mechanisms of international law and peaceful dialogue as viable means of dispute settlement? Is it not a subtle - but powerful - encouragement to use force to settle a dispute when the avenues of legal recourse are blocked and when the legal authority abandons its statutory functions?

The depressingly low level of the performance of the United Nations, as demonstrated by its failure to curb Serb aggression and to enforce its own resolutions, has given the Serb aggressors a sense of superiority over the United Nations itself, in addition to their military edge over their victims. Therefore, in the context of the current debate on the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina, one cannot separate one matter from the other.

The reason behind the Serbs' feeling that they have the upper hand compared with the United Nations is the absence in the case of the permanent members of the Security Council of the political will to apply the relevant provisions of the Charter to the Serb aggressors. If there is a lesson to be drawn from this debate it is that a mere declaration by Member States of their commitment to the Charter of the United Nations is in itself inadequate. Such expressions of intent must be corroborated by a political commitment to implement the provisions of the Charter. Otherwise, the image of the United Nations as mankind's consensus embodiment of universal legal authority would fade. The new perception that would emerge in the minds of peoples and Governments throughout the world would be that of an arbitrary United Nations acting in an expediently selective fashion, or of a United Nations that, because of its impotence, is in effect absent. Either or both perceptions would strip the United Nations of its relevance and validity, without which life on this planet would be truly in jeopardy.

While the cold-war politics of yesterday provided us with ample convenient excuses to justify the paralysis of the United Nations in that era, the end of the cold war and the disappearance of the rules of that game leave us without any justification for its current inaction. In all sincerity and candour, my delegation cannot really see any meaningful reason for the United Nations failure in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, except for the lack of a political commitment to implement the relevant provisions of the Charter.

Article 1 of the Charter clearly states that one of the primary purposes of the United Nations is

> "To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace".

This establishes the concept and significance of collective security.

By Article 24 (1) of the Charter, Member States confer on the Security Council the primary responsibility

to act on their behalf, on the premise that action should be prompt and effective. Paragraph 2 of the same Article stipulates that the Security Council should act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations and on the basis of the specific powers granted to the Council under the Charter.

Therefore, Member States, as represented in this Hall, are required to reaffirm the principles set forth in Security Council resolutions and those endorsed by the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia in regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, it is our collective obligation to bring pressure to bear on the Serbs to observe a cease-fire forthwith with a view to creating a favourable climate conducive to the resumption of peace talks within the framework of the International Conference.

Perhaps the most effective step to make Serbia and Montenegro responsive to the peace efforts lies in redressing the existing military imbalance between it and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The latter should be exempted from the arms embargo imposed by Security Council resolution 713 (1991). Furthermore, the Assembly should call upon the Security Council to support the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in its demand to restore full sovereignty over its territory, to preserve its territorial integrity, to ensure the safe return of Bosnian refugees and displaced persons to their home towns and villages, and to reaffirm the unity of its capital, Sarajevo, in the hope that it might once again become a shining beacon of peace and a cradle of cultural, ethnic and religious pluralism.

With a view to shifting the focus of international efforts towards ending the aggression and bringing about peace, and in a bid to put those efforts on the right track, the delegation of Jordan deems it necessary that the following measures be taken: first, an end should be put to the continuing Serb violations of the international boundary between the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia in accordance with Security Council resolution 796 (1992); secondly, force the Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) should be forced to stop forthwith its arms supplies to the paramilitary Serb forces operating on the territory of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in compliance with Security Council resolution 819 (1993); thirdly, lift the siege on Sarajevo and other cities in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina should be lifted and the necessary measures to ensure protection for the safe havens should be taken; and fourthly, immediate measures must be taken to reopen Tuzla airport in order to facilitate the delivery of international humanitarian relief assistance and to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross free access to the concentration camps.

While the delegation of Jordan recognizes with gratitude and appreciation the invaluable contribution of all individuals, agencies, institutions and non-governmental organizations engaged in providing humanitarian aid to the beleaguered people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we should like to express in the same breath our deep concern over the extremely dangerous humanitarian situation in that traumatized land. Responsibility for the ongoing tragedy falls squarely on the Serbs for their persistent aggression, and on the United Nations for its failure to put an end to Serb atrocities. The magnitude of the tragedy is well depicted in the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which sounds the alarm, pointing out that unless urgent humanitarian relief assistance is delivered to the 1.8 million homeless Bosnians, some 400,000 people are bound to face certain death in the course of the winter months.

Here, once again, the Security Council is in duty-bound to take firm action without delay against the Serbs who deliberately impede the delivery of assistance. Security Council resolution 770 (1992) authorized taking all appropriate measures to ensure the delivery of relief assistance to those in need there.

My country, Jordan, has made a relatively sizeable contribution to units of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) deployed in the former Yugoslavia. Moreover, we have recently informed the Secretary-General of our decision to put at his disposal a brigade of Jordanian troops to be deployed as part of United Nations peace-keeping operations as the need may arise. That is testimony to our commitment to work in unison with the rest of the membership to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in maintaining world peace and security.

Finally, I should like to take this opportunity to assure the Assembly that my delegation's concern over the need to put an end to Serb aggression, to resolve this conflict peacefully and to restore human dignity - which has been trampled by rape, starvation, displacement, physical mutilation and cold-blooded mass killings - is matched only by our concern that the United Nations should regain its credibility.

It would be a grave error to show any laxity in dealing with this issue. Simply put, silence and inaction in the face of the gains that have been achieved and continue to be achieved by the Serbian aggressors on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina could well be misconstrued as an international endorsement of those illegitimate gains. The current situation there is quite alarming indeed. Let me elaborate a little by giving one example.

The framework of negotiations conducted by the international mediators has changed in a grave manner indeed as it now reflects the new realities created on the ground as a result of Serbian aggression. Tolerance of this by the United Nations would be tantamount to its collusion in establishing a precedent which might become a norm in the management of international affairs under the new world order. It would also mean that we might inadvertently drift into the abysmal trap in which mutual interests and power balances among the military heavyweights would become a commonly accepted basis for international cooperation and stability, unfortunately at the expense of the weak and the vulnerable.

Therefore, to rescue the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Member State of the United Nations, by putting an end to the ongoing pernicious aggression, is to rescue the very credibility of our Organization. Confidence in the United Nations should remain the solid underpinning of our common endeavours to save other peoples elsewhere from the scourges of war and acts of aggression, now and in the future.

Mr. FARHADI (Afghanistan): The delegation of Afghanistan is a co-sponsor of the draft resolution on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina now being debated by the General Assembly.

In earlier stages of the grievous and deplorable Bosnian tragedy, the Afghanistan delegation took part in the debates of the Security Council and expressed its views in the meetings of 16 November 1992 19 April 1993 and 29 June 1993.

What is the situation today in Bosnia and Herzegovina? It is much worse than it was at the beginning of the year and more dominated by Serbian high-handedness and oppression. The Security Council's resolutions have been essentially disregarded and shunned by the aggressors - as has been eloquently pointed out this morning by the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Muhamed Sacirbey, and during the day by many other representatives.

The very recent initiative of the European Union has been practically rejected by the Serbians, who have refused to make any compromise to allow the Bosnians viable territories in western or, in particular, eastern Bosnia. The Serbians arrogantly argue that the Bosnian enclaves in eastern Bosnia can remain isolated or that the Bosnians can choose simply to abandon the safe areas of Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde.

Immediately after bringing that stage of the Geneva talks to a dead end on 14 December, the Serbians started shelling Sarajevo once again, and the shelling became the deadliest in weeks. The Serbs are now redeploying troops, tanks and other heavy weaponry to new positions around the city and are preparing for more aggressive acts. Permit me to remind all delegations present of the reaction of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, Mr. Alain Juppé, who, when asked last Tuesday evening in a television interview on France 2 about these deadly shellings, said: "There is a Security Council resolution on air strikes. What are we waiting for?". I am sure that all the members of the Security Council and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization will appreciate the immediate practical implications of this statement. Air strikes are to be carried out when the Serbs resume their shelling of Sarajevo or their attacks upon other enclaves. It is also vital to support the Bosnians' negotiating position by further tightening the enforcement of sanctions.

Mr. Soh (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The resolution on "safe areas", from Sarajevo to Gorazde, remains unimplemented. There are current offers from member States of the international community effectively to implement the resolution and even add new cities to the safe areas. These offers should be immediately accepted and promptly implemented. Let us remember that the sieges of Sarajevo and other Bosnian towns are the most important contributors to the human suffering and the most significant impediment to constructive peace talks. Allowing the sieges to continue is morally and legally reprehensible and strategically fatal. The strangulation of Bosnian cities continues, and the United Nations and especially the Security Council are historically responsible for this untenable and perilous situation.

It is important to secure on the ground the following immediate remedies to this terrible situation: First, Tuzla airport must be opened. Secondly, in accordance with the agreement signed by all the parties and the representatives of the United Nations, Generals Cot and Briquemont, any disruption or blockage of humanitarian convoys by the Serbians should be responded to by the "necessary means". Thirdly, the Serbians must accept compromises to give the Bosnian territories - especially the safe areas of Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde - economic, geographic, political and defensive viability instead of strangling them. Fourthly, consistent with this viability, the Bosnian Government must retain its exit to the sea and a portion of its seashore at Neum. Fifthly, Sarajevo cannot be partitioned as Berlin and Beirut were. It cannot be partitioned for historical, legal, humanistic, political and practical reasons. The international community should clearly legislate on this principle and challenge the siege, which emboldens the

Serbian aggressors to make these demands. An ultimatum should be issued to the Serbs, before the air strikes, once and for all to cease their shelling, remove their heavy weapons from the vicinity and lift the siege.

The draft resolution on the item under consideration establishes the minimal basic principles. This is a draft based on long weeks of negotiation; the views of many delegations have been taken into consideration - all this out of the desire of the sponsors to achieve a draft resolution that can be adopted by consensus, or at least supported by a vast majority of the delegations of the United Nations Member States.

Let me recall the order of 8 April 1993 of the International Court of Justice, by which it directed the Government of "Yugoslavia" (Serbia and Montenegro) to take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of the crime of genocide, whether directed against the Muslim population of Bosnia and Herzegovina or against any other national, ethnic, racial or religious group.

The delegation of Afghanistan, in its aforementioned statements in the Security Council, has maintained that Security Council resolution 713 (1991) declaring an arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia cannot be applied in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That view was supported by the International Fellowship of Reconciliation based in Geneva, the statements of which are recorded by the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in a paper dated 7 September 1993. Accordingly, the delegation of Afghanistan reiterates that it is necessary for the General Assembly to ask the International Court of Justice, on the basis of Article 96 of the United Nations Charter and on article 103 of the rules of the Court, to provide an advisory opinion under the Court's accelerated procedure on the followings questions: first, whether the Security Council ever intended and effectively adapted or otherwise extended its resolution 713 (1991) to be validly applicable with regard to the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina; secondly, whether there exists another Security Council resolution or any other legal authority superseding or in any way limiting any membership rights of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the United Nations Charter, including in particular provisions related to individual and collective self-defence as set forth in Article 51 and, lastly, whether a Security Council embargo remains valid in international law if the Security Council is unable to decide to lift it in the face of evidence that maintaining the embargo in question favours or contributes to the commission of genocide.

In the case of the genocide practised by the Serbians we note that the International Court of Justice, in its Order of 13 September 1993, also observed that

> "All parties to the Convention have thus undertaken to prevent and to punish,the crime of genocide,"

whereas the Court declared itself not satisfied that all that might have been done has been done to prevent commission of the crime of genocide in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina since the Court's Order of 8 April 1993, and, in the opinion of one of its Judges, Security Council resolution 713 (1991) concerning an arms embargo against Yugoslavia, cannot be valid and binding in its operation against Bosnia-Herzegovina, lest it make Members of the United Nations accessories to genocide.

To conclude, the delegation of Afghanistan would also like the General Assembly to confirm the right of all United Nations Member States to use, in cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, all necessary means to uphold and restore the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Afghanistan is worried about the future of all of former Yugoslavia, including territories outside Bosnia. We fully understand the worries of the delegation of Albania expressed in many of the Assembly's Committees. We are deeply alarmed at the continuing systematic abuses committed by the authorities of Serbia and Montenegro, notably in Kossovo, Sandzak and Vojvodina, against Catholics, Moslems, Albanians, Bosnians, Croats, Hungarians and others. They are covered by the international minority protection guarantees stipulated in the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye of 10 September 1919 signed by the former Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and by France, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. Those signatories or their successors bear the legal responsibility for the implementation of the 72-year-old Treaty to avert tragedies of larger magnitude and scale. There is a dreadful danger threatening the Balkans and Europe. Fascism is not dead in Europe. Hegemonistic nationalism is increasingly becoming a perilous disaster for Eastern Europe. History on this eve of 1994 will consider responsible not only those States signatories of the 1919 Treaty but all of us. We have to take all the preventive actions we can.

Mr. TÜRK (Slovenia): The General Assembly is meeting today to discuss the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Tens of thousands of persons, mostly civilians, have died in that war. Hundreds of thousands have been wounded or maimed, and the number of refugees and internally displaced has reached millions.

The untold suffering of innocent victims of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina requires, among other things, intellectual and moral accuracy and permits no obfuscation as to the nature of that war.

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is neither a civil strife nor an ethnic conflict. It is a war for territory started with the objective of creating greater Serbia. Territorial conquest remains the main characteristic of the war. The abhorrent practice of "ethnic cleansing", which has reached genocidal proportions against the Moslems of Bosnia and Herzegovina, is a direct consequence of this kind of war. The reports by Mr. Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, have provided ample evidence to the effect that "ethnic cleansing" is not accidental to, but rather an instrument of, the war. While it is true that the war has become increasingly complex and that atrocities were committed by all sides, its original characteristic as a war of aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina remains essential.

The international community and its institutions, including the United Nations, have been unable so far to address the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina in an effective manner and have not stopped the war. This is at least partly a consequence of the absence of will to characterize the conflict with the necessary clarity and to define adequate remedies. The consequences of this situation for international peace and security are not yet fully evident. However, it has already become clear that the credibility of international institutions has been negatively affected. The Security Council which has, according to the Charter, "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security", should make the necessary efforts to achieve durable peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to restore United Nations credibility.

The path to peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina will not be easy, and it will require persistent efforts. Above all, the general fatigue should not allow the banality of evil to prevail. The most urgent tasks should be carried out immediately. Humanitarian aid must reach the victims, and obstacles to its delivery must be removed. The priority nature of humanitarian assistance is generally recognized, and the task of guaranteeing the delivery of humanitarian aid must be pursued with the necessary vigour.

However, humanitarian assistance is not a substitute for political solutions. Slovenia believes that the search for political solutions must be undertaken not only with full understanding of the urgency of the task but also with proper regard for the viability of such solutions from the point of view of their application in Bosnia and Herzegovina itself and from the point of view of the preservation of stability in the region. The time for good solutions is running out. However, the international efforts should continue, and the basic requirements for a just and durable solution ought to be upheld. Preservation of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a vital element of stability in the Balkans and in Europe as a whole.

Moreover, the United Nations cannot allow the use of force against a Member State to be rewarded. Acceptance of the outcome of aggression would seriously undermine the basic principles of collective security upon which the United Nations is founded. By the same token, the violations of humanitarian law and human rights committed in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina must not go unpunished. The basic norms of civilization have to be upheld through international action. Slovenia welcomes the creation of the International war crimes Tribunal and the fact that the Tribunal has started its work.

In connection with questions related to a settlement of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I should like to quote from the recent joint statement of the Presidents of Slovenia and of the Czech Republic - Milan Kucan and Vaclav Havel - which was made available to the General Assembly in document A/48/703:

> "Above all, we appeal to politicians throughout the world, and especially in Europe, not to remain silent in the face of the destruction of basic human and civil values, the values of civilization, which is taking place with impunity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We very much appreciate the good will of all those who are trying to resolve the conflict, but we are sure that it is necessary to define afresh principles and approaches in discussions on the future of this State. All plans to date concerning its future have accepted the principle of an ethnically pure State, which is in conflict with the idea of the European Union and with the basic values inscribed in the Helsinki and Paris documents of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The ideal of a civil society, which is the foundation of that Union, as well as of the Europe of the future, is being most gravely trampled upon in the immediate vicinity of countries linked in the European Union." *(A/48/703, p. 2)*

I should add that this appeal addresses basic issues that should be of concern not only to the political leaders of Europe but to all political actors of the world.

The international community and its mediators should continue the efforts to achieve a negotiated, just and durable solution. Slovenia supports proposals made by the European Union - on the initiative of Germany and France - as a realistic point of departure for a new and fresh effort in the process of the search for peace. We hope that these proposals will be fully accepted by the parties concerned as the essential basis for negotiations to be pursued in good faith.

Only a solution negotiated in good faith and with full appreciation of the legitimate concerns of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina can be durable. Only such a solution can create the conditions for the voluntary and safe return of refugees and for other measures necessary to remedy the effects of "ethnic cleansing". Only a solution negotiated in good faith can pave the way to normalization in the area.

Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia) *(interpretation from French)*: The Arab Maghreb Union countries on whose behalf it is my honour to speak - Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia - consider the situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as undoubtedly the most serious tragedy to have confronted this Organization recently. It is a tragedy that pricks the conscience of the entire international community and constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

We do not need to recall here the vagaries of the tragedy that has been the lot of this young Republic, which is a Member of the United Nations, as everyone is aware of them.

For almost two years now, a small country at the very heart of Europe - a State Member of this Organization - has been the victim of clear aggression against its territorial integrity, subjecting its people to "ethnic cleansing" bordering on genocide, in which the most elementary principles of human rights and humanitarian law are flouted daily.

Information reaching us confirms the implacable and deliberate pursuit of a policy of escalation, which is dangerous for the future not only of Bosnia and Herzegovina but of the entire Balkan region. It is indicative of the expansionist designs of the Serb forces and of their persistent attitude of defiance towards the international community.

There have been 20 months of war, three international settlement plans and about 30 Security Council resolutions on the situation in the former Yugoslavia, some of which adopted under Chapter VII, as well as hundreds of casualties and thousands of refugees. This alarming situation was confirmed on 18 November 1993, at a meeting of the Security Council, by the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Thorvald Stoltenberg, to whom I should like, here, to pay a tribute for his patient and courageous action.

The lack of safety and the attacks on humanitarian convoys forced the International Committee of the Red Cross recently to suspend its assistance to the approximately 140,000 persons under Serbian control in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The various obstacles erected by the Bosnian Serbs prevented the convoys from reaching the Muslim areas - particularly Zelnica. With no compunction about opening fire on the Blue Helmets of the United Nations, the Serbian forces in Bosnia have prevented the deployment of those soldiers in certain sensitive areas.

Hospitals without electricity or heating, and sometimes abandoned by doctors for reasons of safety, are no longer in a position to treat the sick and the wounded. This situation is intolerable and obviously requires an urgent solution, not only from the humanitarian but also from the political and military points of view. This solution will necessarily entail the implementation, by appropriate means, of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, as well as the active cooperation of countries in the region.

This cooperation is particularly necessary since the arms embargo decreed by the Security Council is penalizing the Bosnian Muslims, who, deprived of any military means, are not in a position to defend themselves and are thus subjected to the worst possible kind of pressure to accept a surrender which will, in the final analysis, be to the benefit of the Serbian aggressors, who are determined to win territorial advantages by force.

The Arab Maghreb Union countries have acted both individually and collectively in every international and regional forum to promote an equitable and lasting solution to this problem. We participated, for example, in the Organization of the Islamic Conference mission, at Foreign Minister level, which between 3 and 20 August 1993, visited Paris, London, Geneva, New York, Washington, Bonn, Moscow and Beijing.

While drawing attention to the seriousness of the situation and the urgent need for an equitable solution, the mission reaffirmed the following principles.

First, any settlement plan must guarantee the territorial integrity and the political independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Second, such a plan should neither sanction the *fait accompli* nor allow the annexation of territories acquired by force.

Third, the United Nations and the major Powers, by acting promptly, energetically and fairly, will help to remove the impression that those involved in the settlement of this conflict are applying double standards.

Fourth, it is essential to put an end to Serbian aggression - if necessary by force - so that negotiations may continue in a calm atmosphere and humanitarian assistance may reach populations so harshly affected by the war and the rigours of winter.

Fifth, pursuant to Article 51 of the Charter, which recognizes the right of self-defence, the Bosnian Muslims should be excluded from the application of the arms and munitions embargo. Indeed, they have been the only ones to suffer from it; the Serbs have managed to circumvent the embargo by taking advantage of their situation in the field and through alliances they have formed and all kinds of collusion.

Sixth, the United Nations and the European mediators must promote an equitable solution, which, if possible, will avoid any partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina or at least guarantee the Bosnians a geographically and economically viable State, one which has access to the Adriatic Sea in the south and the Sava River in the north and which will support two and a half million inhabitants.

Seventh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, because of the destruction and immense damage it has undergone, should, for the reconstruction and defence of its territory, receive substantial and urgent aid from the international community.

Eighth, and finally, any equitable solution, to be lasting, must be guaranteed by the United Nations and the countries of the region in order to avoid any recrudescence of ethnic conflicts and territorial ambitions.

For our part, we still believe that only energetic and well-organized international action can induce the Serbian forces to abide by international law, by depriving them of the support that is enabling them without fear and with near-total impunity to display defiance and arrogance towards the principles of the Charter and international law. The sanctions imposed by the Security Council were unable to prevent the intensification of acts of aggression and the acquisition by force of larger and larger stretches of territory.

The draft resolution before the Assembly has the makings of an equitable and lasting solution to the problem of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Dealing with the problem promptly and efficiently will help to guarantee peace and security in a particularly sensitive region which throughout history has suffered great hardships.

By solving this problem, the United Nations will not only have performed its duty by implementing the principles of its Charter, but will also have forestalled other possible aggressions and potential ethnic conflicts which threaten the region, in a world which seeks a new equilibrium. The credibility of our Organization is at stake.

I should like in conclusion to pay tribute, on behalf of the Arab Maghreb Union countries, to all those who have so tirelessly worked to bring a just and lasting peace to the region and all those who, in the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the non-governmental organizations, have given freely - sometimes at the risk of their own lives - to bring assistance to displaced persons, refugees, the sick and all the other victims of this anachronistic war provoked by nostalgia for a bygone era.

The heroic struggle of the Bosnian Muslims for their very survival and to defend their territory and their legitimate rights, and the efforts of the United Nations and those others who provide humanitarian assistance should have our full support as well as our sustained action in order to expedite a final, equitable and acceptable solution to this conflict, which the media and public opinion are, regrettably, beginning to tire of because of the our Organization's inability to respond effectively and energetically to their expectations.

That is why the delegations of the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union appeal for the active solidarity of the international community, which, with decisive resolve, should mobilize all the means available in order to ensure that the universal principles of law and equity prevail in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. BATU (Turkey): The General Assembly debate on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is taking place once again amid new developments and hopes that a peaceful and just settlement of the conflict may be approaching.

Since last year's debate the Security Council has set up the "no-fly zone", created "safe areas", established the International Tribunal, threatened to use air strikes against those impeding humanitarian convoys and decided to monitor the Serbian-Bosnian borders to prevent the flow of arms into the hands of the Bosnian Serbs. Regrettably,

however, the Council did not exempt Bosnia and Herzegovina from the arms embargo, thus depriving the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina of their right of self-defence. Meanwhile, the Serbs continued their "ethnic cleansing".

The resolutions that the Council adopted, including those based on Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, were half-hearted. The lack of will to follow them up with enforcement measures and the timid response to the aggressor put the Security Council in the position of an ineffective guarantor of international peace and security when it came to defending Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was therefore no surprise that during the course of the year the World Conference on Human Rights made a consensus appeal to the Security Council to stop the genocide taking place in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The world looked on as the people of Bosnia were once again let down.

The road leading to peace, security and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina should not have been a tortuous one. Had good faith prevailed and previous agreements between the parties to the conflict been honoured by the Serbs, particularly those agreements pertaining to the cessation of hostilities and to ending the blockade of humanitarian relief supplies, the situation today would have been much different. To this date, the Bosnian Government has had to negotiate peace amid the bellowing sounds of heavy artillery in its capital. Despite its plight, it has outstandingly demonstrated good faith by actively supporting the latest peace initiatives.

We believe that the effective maintenance of a cease-fire and an end to all hostilities throughout the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina will help create the much-needed atmosphere conducive to honourably pursuing peace negotiations.

With respect to humanitarian relief convoys, the Serbs and Croats should honour their commitments to ensure cooperation with UNPROFOR in order to let the convoys proceed smoothly. There should be no hesitation over using force in any instance when the delivery of humanitarian relief is impeded by the so-called Serbian authorities. Today, once again, the Serbs are impeding the flow of relief and making a mockery of the international community. It is a fact that passivity on the part of UNPROFOR has always led to further Serbian defiance. Furthermore, in order to gain closer access to the population that urgently and desperately needs humanitarian relief, Tuzla airport must be opened, with no conditions attached.

The international community, having been a passive witness to genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, must now shoulder the responsibility of providing the Bosnian Government all the means necessary to maintain a viable State with a multi-cultural and democratic society. Accordingly, its capital, Sarajevo, must be preserved as a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious centre. All heavy weaponry around the city must be removed, and the siege must be lifted once and for all.

Any potential peace agreement must also include provisions to ensure effective implementation. The mistrust among the parties, owing to the dismal record of the Serbs in honouring their commitments, requires strict monitoring and verification of the agreement. The legitimate concerns and expectations of the Bosnian Government in this regard should be respected. Any final settlement must include international guarantees for the future security of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The "carrot and stick" approach behind the last peace initiative should be considered with extra caution. Economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) were imposed by the Security Council in the wake of blatant aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina and massive violations of international law.

My Government totally rejects any implication equating the aggressor and the victim as responsible for the atrocities committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such attempts are a betrayal and a distortion of the realities. There is no question as to who bear the responsibility for the ongoing tragedy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and who have had to defend themselves with their hands tied behind their backs against aggressors armed to the teeth.

Since the beginning of the crisis we have been seriously concerned about the threat of the conflict's spreading beyond the boundaries of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a Balkan country with close relations of history and culture with the many peoples of the region, we are naturally equally concerned over the fate of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Turkey has thus far taken an active stand in support of all efforts to reach a peaceful settlement, and we shall continue to do so. We have mobilized all our means, humanitarian and financial, to help heal the wounds of the besieged people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We have opened our doors to those who were uprooted from their ancestral homes. We have used every channel to assist the Bosnian Government and Croatia to arrive at a mutual understanding. Although prevented from participating in UNPROFOR, we renew our offers to take part and play a positive role in any international peace-keeping effort. We shall continue to support all serious efforts that would

ultimately lead to a just settlement. After a viable and lasting peace is attained, we shall concentrate our efforts on assisting in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the devastated country. We shall try to mend bridges which, not long ago in history, linked the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina together, rather than dividing them.

We ask members of the United Nations to support the draft resolution before us. We believe that it is well - balanced. It sends the right message to the Serbian aggressors and their collaborators.

Finally, I would like to express our feelings of admiration for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who have valiantly withstood the agony and suffering inflicted upon them not only by the aggressor but by those who have insistently viewed them as the underdogs in the conflict. They can rest assured of our total and unqualified support.

Mr. SHKURTI (Albania): The item we are discussing today is related to one of the most important issues we have been dealing with for more than a year. It has to do with the resolution of one of the most tragic conflicts the world has known since the Second World War, and with the maintenance of international order and the safeguarding of respect for the principles and objectives enshrined in the United Nations Charter. It also has to do with the restoration of justice and the maintenance of the credibility of our Organization.

More than 19 months have passed since Serbia undertook its brutal aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Member State of the United Nations, and the consequences of the aggression have been worsening with every passing day. The Serbian aggression, committed by the Serbian military and paramilitary forces, has caused terrible human suffering. More than 200,000 people have been killed, millions of refugees have been forced to leave their homes, thousands of Muslim women have been raped, and much property, including historical and cultural monuments, has been destroyed. These are some of the tragic atrocities of the ongoing severe conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Genocide and "ethnic cleansing", carried out with impunity, are threatening the Muslim people with extermination. Another sad record of this conflict is the fact that the victims of the conflict, the Muslim people, have been unable to defend themselves because they have been prevented from getting the necessary means of protection from extermination. The winter, which has already begun in the besieged cities and villages, threatens people with famine and death from cold.

In such conditions, we highly value the humanitarian efforts of the international community, in particular those of the United Nations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The delivery of humanitarian aid has helped reduce the human suffering and the loss of lives. However, we are concerned about the blockade, mainly by the Serb forces, of the humanitarian convoys.

The Republic of Albania has fully supported the actions undertaken by the international community to stop the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It has unreservedly supported the sanctions imposed by the Security Council on Serbia and Montenegro, aimed at putting an end to this conflict. It has actively taken part in the efforts of the international community to ensure full implementation of those sanctions.

We welcomed the decision of the Security Council to establish the International Tribunal in order to prosecute those responsible for genocide and other crimes against humanity. We warmly welcome its recent inauguration, and we hope that the Tribunal will carry out its work successfully. Acts of genocide, "ethnic cleansing", rape and other shameful crimes which have provoked the outrage of the international conscience must not go unpunished.

It is extremely regrettable that the international community has so far been unable to stop the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This conflict is a challenge to the world community. The events happening there tell us that without a collective response the barbaric acts of genocide and the abhorrent practice of "ethnic cleansing" cannot be stopped. The sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro have had an important effect on bringing the aggressor to the negotiating table, and we hope that they will play a major role in putting an end to the war. We believe that had the sanctions been accompanied by a proper military response to the aggression the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina would have been stopped before assuming its present tragic proportions. It is my Government's belief that implementing the sanctions is crucial in the efforts towards finding a lasting solution to the conflict.

We recognize the suffering of other countries, particularly the neighbouring ones, because of the sanctions regime. Albania is among those countries which have suffered great economic losses, and it is facing economic difficulties. But an early lifting of the sanctions, or any suspension or easing of them at this stage, would be a mistake, and it would have a gross negative impact on the solving of the conflict.

At the time when the Serbian party shows no signs of accepting a serious dialogue and when the war machine of the Belgrade authorities still remains unaffected, sanctions have to prove their effectiveness. The international community must be very careful not to give erroneous signals that could encourage the aggressor.

The Republic of Albania supports any solution that would be based on a free and fair agreement reached between the parties in conflict. In this context, we draw the international community's attention to the difficult position of the Bosnian Government. On the one hand, that Government is faced with human suffering in its country and has been prevented from protecting the Muslim people because of the arms embargo imposed against Bosnia and Herzegovina, and, on the other, we have the well-armed aggressor controlling 70 per cent of the territory through forcible "ethnic cleansing". Therefore, the international community must support the Bosnian Government to ensure equal participation in the peace talks.

The situation in other parts of the territory of former Yugoslavia is grave and deteriorating, particularly in Kosovo. The likelihood of an escalation of the conflict there is a matter of fact. The grave human-rights violations and the large-scale repression committed by the Serbian authorities against the Albanian population there, the military and heavily armed police presence there and the high level of tension, which has increased since the expulsion of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) mission, make it clear that a spillover of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina is quite possible. Therefore, we once again ask the Organization to take timely measures and actions, including the strict implementation of the sanctions, in order to prevent the extension of the conflict to other parts of the former Yugoslavia.

Albania, as one of the sponsors, strongly supports the draft resolution (A/48/L.50) we have before us today. The adoption of this draft resolution would be an additional support of the international community for the efforts aimed at putting an end to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It will be a clear demonstration of the fact that the Organization is determined to abide by its principles and objectives. Through this draft resolution we would make clear that aggression must be punished and that we condemn "ethnic cleansing" and genocide. We would reaffirm that those who commit crimes against peace and humanity will be held accountable for them.

Mr. WALKER (United States of America): When the United States voted in favour of the corresponding resolution last year, we hoped that there would be no need for the General Assembly to vote on a similar draft resolution at this session. Unfortunately, those hopes were crushed by another year of aggressive war and gross violations of human rights.

One of the most chilling aspects of the Bosnian crisis is that it forces us to confront a number of horrific realities. There is no doubt that much of the human suffering that has engulfed the former Yugoslavia, and especially Bosnia, during the past two years cannot be attributed simply to the heat of battle. "Ethnic cleansing", mass rape, the denial of food and medicine, and the murder and torture of civilians were all part of a calculated military and political strategy. While victims and criminals can be found among all sides to the conflict, there is no doubt that the Bosnian Muslims have been the war's major victims and that the Bosnian Serbs have committed the vast majority of the atrocities that have horrified us all.

In this regard, the United States remains determined to make sure that the war-crimes Tribunal on the former Yugoslavia becomes an effective instrument of truth. We encourage all Member States to comply with the provisions of the resolution on the need to provide the necessary resources to punish those responsible for violations of international law. We remind all States, whether present here or not, that if they refuse to hand over for trial those individuals within their jurisdiction who have been indicted, they might be subject to international sanctions, while the accused will become international pariahs trapped within the borders of their countries.

We ask all States that have joined us in condemning the massive violations of human rights in Bosnia during the past two years to join us in ensuring the effectiveness of the war-crimes Tribunal. The victims of the atrocities in Bosnia cry out for justice, and we must do everything we can to ensure that those cries are answered.

With that in mind, let me add an explanation of our interpretation of paragraph 25. The United States values greatly the work done by the Commission of Experts, which has established a strong foundation for the efforts of the chief Prosecutor of the Tribunal. It is our hope that the chief Prosecutor will expeditiously begin the process of investigating and prosecuting violators of international humanitarian law in the former Yugoslavia. We support the Commission's continuing to collect information pending transition of its activities to the office of the chief Prosecutor, as contemplated by Security Council resolution 827 (1993). In our view, the Prosecutor's office of the war-crimes Tribunal, once it is fully functioning, will include within it all of the current functions of the Commission. A full and complete transition is necessary

in order to protect the authority of the chief Prosecutor's office and the integrity of the entire process.

My Government's views on what needs to be done in Bosnia have not changed. We stand by our previous decisions. Those of the Serbian side must understand that the beginning of their reintegration into the civilized world and a lessening of international pressure is impossible until a peace agreement is reached and they demonstrate a sincere willingness to implement it.

No one should read this draft resolution (A/48/L.50) as an invitation to delay, or to encourage delay, in achieving a negotiated agreement, for the draft resolution speaks forthrightly about the costs paid by innocent victims in the absence of a settlement. That, in my Government's view, is a significant part of the meaning and intent of this draft resolution: to emphasize the primacy of humanitarian concerns. While the human suffering that this conflict causes daily cannot finally be ended without a negotiated settlement, we - parties to the conflict and all concerned - must see to it that humanitarian assistance reaches innocent victims. The United States remains willing to do its share to help alleviate humanitarian suffering in the former Yugoslavia. In fact, since 1991, the United States has provided over $447 million in humanitarian assistance. We shall continue to monitor humanitarian needs and shall consider further funding as required.

Under the draft resolution under discussion here the General Assembly would call upon the parties and the international community to do, and to refrain from doing, many things. The list is long because, sadly, the conflict in Bosnia, as in Croatia, has yet to be resolved by the only means possible: voluntary agreement by the parties to a viable political settlement. For my Government, it is this issue that is at the heart of the draft resolution. We hope that the commendable efforts of Lord Owen and Mr. Stoltenberg, with the active involvement of the European Union, will at long last help the parties reach an agreement that is both just and freely agreed to.

Mr. NOBILO (Croatia): The bedrock of the international community's policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina thus far has been the aim of remedying the horrific humanitarian consequences of the war.

The Republic of Croatia, despite being hampered itself by the consequences of the Belgrade aggression, continues nevertheless to be at the forefront of that humanitarian effort. Through 31 October 1993, the Croatian Government had spent an estimated $773 million in direct financial outlays for the care of Bosnian refugees, of which at least three fourths was for the care of the Bosnian Muslim refugees. Since they also get free public transportation, education and medical care in Croatia, total costs are likely to be much higher. At the present rate, the Croatian Government is likely to spend another $205 million for their care through the winter.

Along with some 300,000 Bosnian refugees in Croatia, my Government is also taking care of some 250,000 of its own displaced persons, bringing our direct financial outlays in this regard to $1.52 billion so far.

My Government has been able to manage the tremendous social costs because of large contributions from individual taxpayers. The citizens of Croatia paid 38 per cent of their income in a social-programmes tax in 1992, on top of the regular income tax of 22 per cent.

Over the past two years the Croatian Government has received pledges of $64 million in grants for the care of displaced persons and refugees, of which $49 million has been paid so far. Virtually all the grants have come from European official and private institutions, to which we are deeply grateful. But in all fairness, this is far below any reasonable expectations. We are especially concerned that this assistance and sustenance aid continue to decrease while our burden is increasing.

I take this opportunity once again to appeal to the international community, especially non-European Governments, to consider more closely the burden faced by my Government and the Croatian people in this regard; my Government needs their assistance in caring for all of the refugees and displaced persons in Croatia. Likewise, my Government needs their help in promoting a policy that binds all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to peace, not to war.

The international community has to a large degree condoned the only significant hostilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, apart from the shelling of Sarajevo, that have occurred since late in the spring: the offensives by Bosnian Muslim armed forces against the Bosnian Croat enclaves in central Bosnia. This has caused tremendous financial costs to Croatia because of the new wave of refugees, and more important, it has resulted in tremendous human costs to the Croat community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Not only my Government, but the Croatian people, view that indifference with serious concern.

We must recall that the Croat community was the first victim of Serbian aggression in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Ravno and in Kupres, months before the siege of Sarajevo began. Furthermore, we cannot underestimate the role that Bosnian Croats have played in the resistance to Serbian aggression in Bosnia. Without the Croatian

Defence Council, there would be no Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina today.

My Government has taken many steps to stem the fighting in central Bosnia between Muslims and Croats, especially through the offices of my Foreign Minister, who has met on numerous occasions with both the Bosnian Muslim and the Bosnian Croat leadership. We have tried to impress upon both sides that their conflict is only aiding the Belgrade authorities and their proxies, who remain the major threat to peace and stability in the region. However, the consequences of Serb aggression, which has forced 60 per cent of Bosnia's population to live on 30 per cent of its territory, combined with the scarcity of resources and with lawlessness, have largely overwhelmed my Government's initiatives for peace.

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina has deteriorated from clear-cut Serb aggression against Muslims and Croats to a conflict between all three sides. Even worse, the conflict is now "valley against valley", with no clear pattern and with continuously shifting alliances.

My Government has been more successful, however, in promoting respect for international humanitarian law regarding the delivery of much-needed assistance to central Bosnia and other imperilled areas. Between 17 October, when the Joint Commission made up of representatives of Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Croats and international aid groups was formed on the initiative of my Government, and 13 December, 244 convoys with some 14,000 tonnes of food have left Croatia through Bosnian Croat-controlled territory.

Even though food convoys pass through freely to central Bosnia, some convoys have recently been delayed. These convoys, however, were carrying supplies and raw materials with multiple uses. In that regard, we call on international agencies to show the necessary concern to provide guarantees that multiple-use materials will not be misused for military purposes against the Bosnian Croat side.

We have consistently encouraged the Bosnian Croat authorities to take stricter measures related to discipline in their armed forces. We have allowed members of the Croatian Army with dual citizenship to return to Bosnia and Herzegovina with exactly this in mind: to strengthen the moderate wing of the Croatian Defence Council and thus to neutralize the extremist elements. My Government will continue to put pressure on the Bosnian Croat authorities on this very important issue, in this way and in other ways.

My Government has consistently pursued a policy focused on political negotiation and peace for my country and for Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is why we pursued negotiations even before the hostilities started, and why we always advised the Bosnian Croat leadership to accept the peace plans mediated by the international community. The Bosnian Croats cooperated with the European Community initiative for a referendum on the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and later supported the Cutiliero plan, the Vance-Owen plan, and now the Owen-Stoltenberg plan as concluded on HMS *Invincible*.

The commitment of the Croats to a peaceful solution is evident not only in their support for all the peace plans, but also in their compromises in the Owen-Stoltenberg plan. The European Union has recognized this, and the Bosnian Croats have not been requested to make any additional concessions in Geneva.

Some still promote a military solution to the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina, despite the fact that none of the sides have been able to move the present front lines significantly. We do not believe that this is the best solution, unless it combines outside military intervention with the lifting of the arms embargo for both victims of Serbian aggression: the Muslims and the Croats. Instead, we support international guarantees for the implementation of the peace plan, including Serb withdrawal from the proposed Muslim republic. Since the international community has spoken clearly against intervention and the lifting of the arms embargo, we have accepted the second best option for peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina: the Owen-Stoltenberg plan. We too would have preferred the first option, and should not be blamed if it was not possible for our wishes to be realized.

My Government's interests in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been clearly stated from the beginning: to protect the smallest of the three communities there and to limit the risk of military advances towards Croatia's Adriatic coast. In judging the overall situation in the region, one must have in mind that one of the primary objectives of the war has been the acquisition of the Croatian coast.

We wish to stress once again that, other than outside military intervention against the Belgrade army and their proxies, political settlement under the auspices of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia is the best option for ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the region. That is why my Government has strongly supported the recent plan of action by the European Union, which is consistent with the earlier peace initiative of my President. We strongly believe that the sanctions regime and the international isolation of the Belgrade authorities are of even more critical importance

to a peaceful settlement than any limited military options. In that regard, we call on the international community to show the utmost caution in the suspension of sanctions, since the sanctions have proven to be the only successful measure undertaken against the Belgrade regime.

The question of sanctions must be linked not only to Bosnia but also to the problem of United Nations Protected Areas in Croatia, in accordance with Security Council resolution 871 (1993). If we do not solve the problem of occupied territories in Croatia, the suspension of international isolation and sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro could result in a new war between Croatia and Serbia, engulfing Bosnia as well. A *modus vivendi* in Croatia can only be a logical short intermediate step towards building confidence in the reintegration of these areas into Croatia's political and legal system and in the definition of cultural and local autonomy for the Serbs in the area. Belgrade has to recognize Croatia's international borders before it is allowed to emerge from international isolation.

I must add that my Government and the Croatian people have been greatly distressed by the pictures in the media regarding Ahmici, Stupni Do and the old bridge in Mostar, but we must also note that the acts in question were not committed by the Croatian nation: they were committed by extremist Bosnian Croat elements, whose criminal behavior we condemn in the most absolute terms.

We sincerely hope that war crimes committed by all sides are brought before the International war-crimes Tribunal as soon as possible. This will promote reconciliation between the communities and help the numerous refugees and displaced persons feel safe about returning to their homes. As the sanctions regime is the most critical element in stopping the war, the Tribunal must be the most critical element in sustaining peace.

In conclusion, Croatia can honestly say with full confidence that, along with its humanitarian aid and other critical assistance early in the war, it may have contributed more to the survival of the Bosnian Muslim community than any other single country. My Government is proud to say this, because the willingness of the Croatian people to help the Bosnian Muslim community extends beyond politics and the realities of central Bosnia. It is a true harbinger of reconciliation and peace between the peoples of the region.

My Government will continue its positive efforts with respect to the Bosnian Muslim community and, particularly after we have achieved peace, we shall exert efforts to link the Muslim-majority Republic, through Croatia, with the Europe "of order", so as to prevent an escalation of activities by militant elements such as those who killed 12 innocent Croatian citizens in Algeria only a few days ago. We have already begun to promote this cooperation through the new Bosnian Croat Council, made up of Croat leaders throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is another reason why my delegation is going to support the draft resolution before us.

To achieve these wider international-security priorities, we cannot overemphasize that post-war reconstruction assistance will be of critical value to all of the victims of Serbian aggression. My Government considers the issue of economic stability to be the main pillar of a successful peaceful settlement of any crisis and has often taken drastic steps to keep its economy stable. We hope that the European Union peace plan will give full priority to these economic aspects, which are critical for peace and stability in the region.

Mr. TAYLHARDAT (Venezuela) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Since the beginning of the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Venezuela has sought to do its part in the quest for a solution to this problem, which is, without any doubt, one of the most complicated and difficult problems the United Nations has had to face; and over the last two years, the situation in the former Yugoslavia, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, has been one of the most delicate issues with which we members of the Security Council have been called upon to deal.

On many occasions my country, along with the other members of the Council that belong to the Non-Aligned Movement, has proposed vigorous and unambiguous responses to the disturbing dimensions this crisis has assumed over time. But our proposals were seconded on only a few occasions. For various reasons and because of changing circumstances, the international community settled for limiting its involvement on the ground and allowing the nature of the conflict to set the parameters within which a political solution could be negotiated. It is clear that the conditions did not exist for the Security Council to resort to all the means available to it under the Charter. There was no choice but to accept the evidence of the political realities that define this crisis and that continue to shape the possible modalities for a solution.

Venezuela has always held the conviction that if more determined and more decisive action had been taken at the critical early stages of the crisis, the magnitude and violence of this war could have been better controlled. By the same token, more categorical and effective warnings should have been issued to all those who would settle territorial, ethnic, religious or nationalistic claims by force. The destructive force of these trends is still making itself felt, and we cannot be satisfied with the way in which the

international community has sought, thus far, to face this painful, indeed tragic, conflict.

The instability in the Balkans has not been set right, and its example is spreading. The United Nations has transferred the primary political responsibility for the solution to this conflict to regional forums and the groups of countries most directly affected, as is shown by the various initiatives within the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Washington Group. As a result, the United Nations has been distanced from the solution to the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The remaining connections, particularly through one of the co-presidencies of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia and of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), are focused on helping achieve a political settlement negotiated directly by the parties, responding to the humanitarian crisis and ensuring the application of the sanctions regime. The full range of responsibilities of the United Nations in the event of agreement on a peace settlement remains to be clarified.

The draft resolution on Bosnia and Herzegovina before the Assembly embodies, to a great extent, the concerns Venezuela has felt and the positions it has taken throughout the crisis and its determination to continue promoting the quest for solutions that are consistent with this Organization's basic, underlying principles. However, experience and the prevailing international political realities make it advisable for us to give priority to any effort aimed at putting an end to the hostilities and forestalling any risk of a spread of military activity. The opportunity of preserving a multi-ethnic and multireligious State in Bosnia and Herzegovina appears to have been lost. There was a time when recourse to "all necessary means" to preserve that option seemed to be a real possibility, but it no longer appears feasible. At one time Venezuela sponsored that view, as is reflected in our positions in the Security Council.

Today we must say that suspending the arms embargo or encouraging the exercise of the right to self-defence would amount, in the context of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to an invitation to revive hostilities and deepen the conflict, and there would be no political or military possibility of such steps helping to roll back the situation to its original state. The role of the United Nations is not to impose peace through war but to promote peace through negotiation and reconciliation. Today a fair, equitable, stable and definitive peace settlement, with the participation of all the sectors involved, is the only way out of this conflict.

Venezuela is honoured that a Venezuelan citizen was appointed Prosecutor of the International Tribunal to judge war crimes in the former Yugoslavia. We can assure the Assembly that Mr. Ramón Escobar Salón, Prosecutor of the International Tribunal, in carrying out his functions with consummate competence and with all the devotion and dedication this important post requires, will live up to the expectations of the entire international community.

Venezuela fully understands the positions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and respects its right to a decision by the General Assembly in this regard. However, our analysis of the draft resolution, in the light of the considerations I have set forth, in particular in connection with operative paragraphs 17 and 18, will lead us to abstain in the voting.

We note with concern that much remains to be done before the causes of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its multifarious consequences cease to appear on our agenda and to require our attention. Venezuela, whose term in the Security Council will come to an end on 31 December, will continue to promote any initiative that could lead to a solution to this painful problem. We will continue to support efforts to put an end to this sad episode of modern history. Our position is defined by objective policies guided by our commitment to peace and by the ties of friendship that we maintain and wish to strengthen with all the nations of the former Yugoslavia.

We trust that the peace negotiations to be held in Geneva on 21 December and in Brussels the following day will lead to an end to the hostilities and pave the way to a lasting solution. We also trust that these meetings will result in a firm commitment from all the parties to facilitate the flow of international humanitarian assistance to ensure that the suffering people of the former Yugoslavia, having experienced the horrors and appalling consequences of the war, are at least spared the hardships of the cruel winter that Europe is already experiencing.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.